EAST COAST AMERICA WEST COAST

POOR TURNOUT FOR ERIC'S TURN ON

OF ALL the British acts that appeared in New York recently, Pink Floyd took the most trouble. For their Fillmore East appearance they performed their 25 minute piece of avant garde 'Atom Heart Mother' with a 10 piece brass ensemble, a mixed choir of 20 and their very own conductor, Peter Phillips. Audience reaction was good and the place was full.

Not full at all was the Felt Forum in Madison Square Gardens for the New York debut (apart from a working press reception) of Eric Burdon's group, War. Originally set for two concerts it was cut down to only one and that was half full. Pity, because Eric was in superb form, covering all the jazz-rock bases and really hanging it together. Eric, talking about his band, said: 'The band told me not to get paranoid because I didn't play as well as them. They said they'd teach me and I asked them why me? They told me, Because you came to us' ". So Eric has a good group, a No 1 hit record, 'Spill the Wine' and some good promotion. But nobody came.

Poor turnout

Poor turnout also for Mungo Jerry on the bill at the Fillmore East and again it was the same thing — a good hit record and all the trimmings Mungo handed out kazoos at their gig and everybody blew away happily.

Rick Nelson, rock idol of a few years ago, is working solidly, ever since his off beat version of Bob Dylan's 'She

getting anywhere. I finally figured out what I wanted to do and the result was a big record for me, 'She Belongs to Me'. It s country and a logical extension of what I've been doing all along. I feel easy about it — not like I've worked several months to go to Nashville for a few days and call myself a country singer. I've been singing country a long time, like Don and Phil (Everly). Nobody realises how much of a country music feeling there was in those hits of nearly ten years ago that I made".

Best known

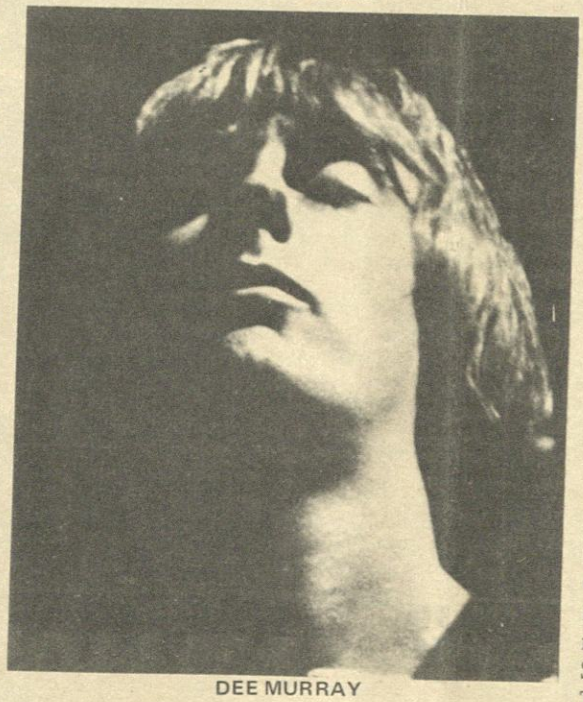
Randy Newman is best known, perhaps, in Britain as the man who wrote the Alan Price hit, 'Simon Smith and his Amazing Dancing Bear'. But right now he is a superwriterhero in America along with Lauro Nyro and John Sebastian. He played a small folk-type club in New York's Greenwich Village the other week and all the heavy people on the rock scene turned up to dig him and applaud. Then he zapped them with information like: "Bing Crosby is the best pop singer I ever heard". "Lorenz Hart (of Rodgers and Hart) was almost, until Dylan the best lyric writer there ever was."

Smokey Robinson and the Miracles' British hit, 'Tears of a Clown' is now being released in America.....Surprise guest at a Jefferson Airplane recording session — Little Richard playing piano on an original tune by Airplane drummer Joey Covington.....The Second

Ian Dove

ELTON JOHN

NIGEL OLSSON



DEE MURRAY

Elton wows 'em at the Troubadour

ELTON John, England's newest gift to America, sounds like a number of other performers to a number of people. But that's no hassle. He is a super performer and during his recent limited number of bookings in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Philadelphia, he exploded with such power that people are anxiously awaiting his return scheduled for the end of this month.

John's voice and piano style has been described by various American writers as reminding them of Jose Feliciano, Mick Jagger, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Leon Russell. And that's not a bad group of guys to be associated with!

John will be playing before a larger span of people when he returns to the United States because the talent agency people are working up a major tour for him which will include bookings in the major rock rooms like the Fillmores in San Francisco and New York City. He will also be pitched to the major national television shows and the odds are that he'll land those appearances.

So major have his appearances been in the U.S., coupled with the good, good exposure for his first album released on Uni, that a single from his first LP is being released, coupling "Your Song" and "Take Me To The Pilot". Both were recorded in England and released on the DJM label.

While he was playing at the Troubadour in Los Angeles (this city's classiest rock club), folk singer Odetta came up on stage and really worked out with Elton on "Take Me To The Pilot."

Elton's music and Bernie Taupin's lyrics really inspire people to sing along. Elton has adopted a Southern accent, which is really groovy for the kind of songs he sings.

Elton's style of combining some country music with good ole rock and roll is further enhanced by the melodrama of his falling to his knees to bang away at the piano, which he did to everyone's pleasure on that ole nasty message song, "Burn Down The Mission".

Elton sets an emotional level for himself when he works before an audience and he doesn't wander to far away from that plateau. "There are rwo sides to Elton John," Elton told us at the Troubadour. He had just finished playing "Your Song" solo on the piano. Then onstage came drummer Nigel Olsson to really take care of business, including working two sets of bass drums and bassist Dee Murray, who is all smiles and movement when he plays a really fine constant sound kind of electric bass.

Elton is the moving force in the trio, but he does allow his sidemen to add their own vocal licks on some of the numbers as they join in and round out the group's vocal sound.

Elton has grown a beard which makes him look much older than the picture on his album. He plays dressed in black overalls with white stars all over them. His aluminium coloured boots have stars imprinted in the leather. He literally has star, printed all over him. When he played San Francisco his overalls were red with stars. And again people dug his funky music.

Part of the reason for Elton's "instant" success in America is that he is not in the amplified guitar, distorted sound school. His music is very hard, that's true, and his drummer beats the hell out of his instruments. But it is really Elton's gutsy, raspy at times and romantically clear at other times voice which works its magic.

Elton, Nigel and Dee have been together just three months. Their in person sound is very much harder than that which is heard on Elton's first album simply called "Elton John" which has many more musicians playing.

"We want to make our live performances different from our records," Elton explains. He admits being completely surprised by the raves he has received and by the standing ovations he has faced. He was also especially pleased to have had one of his own favourites — singer, composer, pianist David Ackles playing on the bill with him at the two Troubadours in L.A. and San Francisco. And when Leon Russell came to see him and then invited him to his house, Elton knew that he was in with the "in group" of Los Angeles' pop musicians.

The 23-year-old singer has just recorded the title song for the film "Friends" and there is a second album to please us all. Elton and Bernie have been writing songs which make sense to their own creative consciences for little more than one year. They started out writing fairly simple rock ditties but stopped when they decided they were awful, and that they could create more meaningful works.

Elton will be back in the U.S. for four to six weeks. He won't have to prove himself so hard the next time around.

Eliot Tiegel